

13850
11631. g. 13
L I F E.

A

P O E M.

T O

The Reverend J*** C*****, M. A.

STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

By JAMES PARSONS, M. A. K

LATE STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH.

— — — Vis recte vivere? quis non?
Si Virtus hoc una potest dare, fortis omiffis
Hoc age Deliciis.

HOR.

O X F O R D,

Printed for J. FLETCHER, in the Turl; and sold by J. FLETCHER and C.
in St. Paul's Church-Yard, London.

M. DCC. LXVIII.



L I F E.

A

P O E M.

FRRIEND of my Youth, whose Honesty of Heart,
Scorns the mean Flatt'rer's or Dissembler's Part,
To Thee, my Muse, if any Muse attends,
In rude unpolish'd Strains this Tribute sends.
Though rough my Numbers, and my artless Song
In broken Syllables scarce creep along,
Reason's my Guide, and Truth my steady Aim;
I neither court nor dread the Breath of Fame.
If from these Lines some slight Instruction flow,
If haply we may learn OURSELVES TO KNOW,
The Point is gain'd; no higher Meed I ask,
The amplest Recompence awaits my Task.

A 2

DEIGN

DEIGN Thou, my Friend, to lend Attention's Ear,
 With Coolness judge, with Candour be severe;
 Mark the gay Follies that in Myriads rise,
 And dare 'midst reigning Wickedness be WISE.

BE HORACE then our Guide; his Steps to trace
 My ardent Wish, though with unequal Pace:
 Not when in Pleasure's Bow'r he sweeps the Lyre,
 Frantic with LYDIA's Charms, or BACCHUS' Fire;
 But when in sober moralizing Vein
 To Truth and Decency he tunes the Strain:
 So at mild Eve shorn of his dazzling Ray
 With temp'rate Glory shines the King of Day.

How oft, my Friend, in meditating Mood,
 On ISIS' Willow-crowned Bank we've stood,
 Luxuriant Nature op'ning to our View,
 Ten thousand thousand Charms of various Hue;
 How oft the pleasing Converse thus began,
 While Nature's Beauties led us up to Man!

Line 10. Alluding to that Line in Horace's first Epistle —

“ Quid verum atque decens curo et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum.”

“ See

“ See how the Stream unruffled and serene
“ Steals gently winding through the painted Scene!
“ How fresh the Verdure through the Meadow springs,
“ How blythe amid his Flock the Shepherd sings:
“ While the smooth Mirror of this lucid Stream
“ Shews the gay Landskape with reflected Gleam!
“ But should the Fury of the blust’ring North
“ Call all the Tumult of the Tempest forth;
“ Should Cloud on Cloud in terrible Array
“ With Storms incessant quench the Light of Day;
“ The big-swol’n Stream impetuous breaks it’s Bound,
“ And scatters watry Desolation round.
“ Lost is the fertile Meadow’s lively green,
“ Plenty no more, no more the Flocks are seen.
“ Emblem of Life: — So smoothly glides the Day,
“ When Reason, sov’reign Queen of Life, bears Sway:
“ But when fell Passions rage without Controul,
“ And Vice and Pleasure agitate the Soul,
“ Then enters Sorrow with her sickly Train,
“ Comes dire Remorse, and Discontent, and Pain.”
Thus with *coarse* Moral we the Hours beguil’d,
And, tickled with our own fond Fancies, smil’d.

NOR think though banish'd far from WOLSEY's Dome*,
Thoughtless through Life's Obscurity I roam;
Ev'n in the Silence of this lonely Vale
Reflection daily tells her moral Tale.
Come then, and with me take thy secret Stand
On some aspiring Point of Fancy's Land;
Whence the Mind's Eye may view with piercing Ken,
The Toils, the Cares, and Fears of busy Men.

WHAT mighty Thing is this which Life we call,
So highly priz'd, so hardly lost by all?
Which Pain itself so wondrously beguiles,
That at it's Name she lifts her Head and smiles.
The Love of which so captivates the Mind,
That ev'n the Wretch, whom Slav'ry's Fetters bind,
Whom Nought awaits but Misery and Pain,
Courts his Tormentor and admires the Chain;
Bears the sharp Scourge that cruel Tyrants give,
And shrinks at Death: — is this, my Friend, to LIVE?

* Christ Church.

BUT

BUT hark — a Voice loud echoing in my Ear,
“ Why partial pass a Censure so severe?
“ Why view the Picture in a gloomy Light
“ Nor give to Grace and Form Position right?”
Reproof e’er meets me with attentive Mind,
Willing to teach, to listen more inclin’d:
Chang’d be the Prospect: Sunshine beam around,
And glitt’ring Objects through the Scene abound.

BORNE on a Steed of fierce intrepid Kind,
That mocks at Danger and outstrips the Wind,
The gaudy Pomp of MAJESTY appears;
Boldly erect his stately Form he rears:
His fullen Aspect and aspiring Mien
Breathe War, and Cruelty, and fell Disdain.
From complete Armour dazzling to behold
Beams the bright Lustre of the burnish’d Gold.
His Crest high-nodding with distinguish’d Blaze
Outshines gay IRIS’ Tints and PHOEBUS’ Rays.
Aloft in Air sails floating to the Eye
His Banner deeply ting’d with crimson Dye:

Inwove

Inwove in silver Characters is seen
GLORY.—Unnumber'd o'er the spacious Green
Legions await their Leader's dread Command;
Grasping their unsheath'd Steel they firmly stand:
Harsh Features speak the Habit of their Souls,
In their fierce Eye-Balls Indignation rolls.
The Spirit-stirring Trumpet's shrill Alarm
Sharpens the Fury of their threat'ning Arm:
Onward they rush: Yon City is the Prize,
Where Learning's sacred Temples tow'ring rise,
Where Art and Commerce variously combine;
Where flames the Treasure of the precious Mine.
See from her Gates advancing to the Fight
A valiant Band, whom Friendship's Ties unite,
Oppression's Foes! undaunted as they move:
Loud echoes LIBERTY and COUNTRY'S LOVE.
Their Swords Defiance gleam; their Hearts beat high,
Stout Hearts, resolv'd to conquer, or to die.
Dreadful the Onset: Fury, Scorn, Despair,
In Battle mix; Shouts rend the troubled Air.
HORROR with hideous Spectres compass'd round,
And blood-distilling Robe now stalks the Ground.

DEATH

DEATH, grievly King of Terrors, hovers o'er,
And grimly smiles at Smell of human Gore.
Long hangs the Battle poiz'd in equal Scales,
Fate gives the Word, and GLORY's Force prevails.
Oppress'd by Numbers, and o'ercome by Toil,
Freedom lies bleeding on her native Soil;
Aghast the City views her Guardians fall;
Heart-piercing Shrieks resound along the Wall.

FAIN would the Muse here spread her dark'ning Veil,
And shade the Sequel of this mournful Tale;
Nor tell how Beauty, Youth, and hoary Age
Fell by the Victor's unrelenting rage.

SOME few alas! survive, (yet harder Fate!)
Reserv'd to swell the bloody Triumph's State.
See captive Nobles march in silent Row,
Their Looks bespeaking heavy Load of Woe.
The widow'd Queen her Orphans leads along
Meanly insulted by the Rabble Throng;
Her much-lov'd Lord with Cords ignobly bound,
His Breast intrench'd with many a ghastly Wound.

Behind is dragg'd:—The Victor shuts the Rear,
Proudly exulting in his gilded Car.
FAME sounds her Trumpet, while the savage Crowd
Shouting, a God! a God! proclaim aloud.

PITY surveys the Scene with melting Eyes,
And with uplifted Hands thus softly sighs:
If this be GLORY, rather let me dwell
With the poor Hermit in his lonely Cell,
Drink of the Spring, and for my simple Food
Crop the wild Fruitage of the neighb'ring Wood.
Go, mighty Victor, go: enjoy thy State;
By Murder crown'd (I envy not) be GREAT.

CLOS'D be the Scene of Bloodshed, Rage, and Strife;
Come now ye calmer Joys of civil Life.
Hark HONOUR calls, her Summons we'll obey,
Mix with her Vot'ries and explore the Way.
How perilous the Height! th' Ascent how steep!
Scarce do the thronging Crowd their Footing keep:
With *Sisyphéan* Toil the Hill just gain;
Quick and impetuous tumble down again.

The

The Sight how rare when HONOUR from her Seat
Descending, modest Merit deigns to meet;
Deigns with extended Hand her Steps to guide,
And place her firmly seated by her Side!
HONOUR in *native* Majesty array'd
Seeks not from feeble Art her less'ning Aid:
Sceptres and Coronets, such gewgaw Things,
The Pride of Courtiers, and the Toys of Kings,
Away she throws: inflam'd with eager Joy
Millions of tinsel'd Fools embrace the Toy;
Dream on in fancy'd Grandeur, empty State,
And proudly seem to loll in HONOUR's Seat.

THE PATRIOT see, with nervous Periods hung
How rolls the rattling Thunder of his Tongue!
So deep the Argument, the Truth so bright,
So glows each daring Word with *Freedom's* Light,
That ATHENS' Genius mourns with drooping Head
Her Eloquence, her boasted Glory, fled.
Attentive Senates round in Crowds he draws,
Who catch Half-words, and wond'ring gape Applause.

With Zeal extravagant their Bosoms burn;
 "How great the Sentiment! how keen the Turn!"

BUT OBSERVATION shrewd, with prying Eye
 Viewing the Game in Shape of Stander-by,
 Sees this great Champion-Wonder of his Age,
 While beats his Heart with FREEDOM's gen'rous rage,
 While seem his Eyes his *Country* to behold,
 Bestow a Side-Glance on attractive *Gold*.
 Ye Gods! he flyly takes the proffer'd Bait:
 Alas poor Liberty! Oh ruin'd State!
 Dim are those Eyes that check'd *Corruption's* Stride,
 Mute is the Tongue the Senate wont to guide.
 Thus barking *Cerberus* the SIBYL charm'd,
 And with her honied Cake his Rage disarm'd:
 Hush'd was the Clamour of his triple Tongue,
 Drowsy strait down his shaggy Length he flung.
 While thus th' infernal Guardian sleeping lay,
 The bold *Invader* safely took his Way.

Line 18. The bold *Invader* — In Allusion to this Line,
 Occupat *Aeneas* aditum custode sepulto. VIRG. *ÆN.* Lib. vi. ver. 424.

CURS'D

CURS'D be the Wretch, that on a ruin'd State
Dares build the Wish dishonest to be GREAT:
Dares for vain Title, Shew, and empty Fame,
Barter that precious Crown of Life, *Good Name*.
May vengeful Conscience o'er his Pillow strew
The pointed Thorn: May ever to his View,
His injur'd Country rise, before him glide,
Like BANQUO's Ghost still pointing to her Side.

EV'N plodding INDUSTRY, whose daily Care
To gain with sweating Brow the scanty Fare,
Spurns at such HONOUR, shakes her scornful Head,
And feels more Comfort in her lowly Shed.

SHALL REASON then demurely pace the Streets,
Cringing to ev'ry titled Fool she meets?
Shall Wonder stretch abroad her Eyes and stare,
Caught by the Tinsel of an Outside Glare,
Presuming fondly that from brighter Clay,
Rises the Mushroom Honour of To-Day?
Forbid it Heav'n: Let empty Greatness know,
The Eye of Reason is not lur'd by Show:

She

She weighs in Judgment's Scale the Worth of Things,
 Free and unbias'd by the Smile of Kings.
 The gorgeous *Circumstance* of bloated Pride,
 Ne'er can the Vices of the Bosom hide:
 Through the thick Cover of delusive Art
 Stares the foul Fiend *Deformity of Heart*.
 Thus says bold Truth, (and ever will she find
 A friendly Welcome to the honest Mind)
 The Seat of Honour is the gen'rous Breast,
 Whence Virtue springs in Godlike Deeds exprest:
 Titles nor Worth diminish aught, nor make;
 They claim Respect but for the Bearer's Sake.

BUT see where FORTUNE mounted on her Wheel,
 With partial Hand her Favour seems to deal:
 Around crowd Vice, and Insolence, and Pride;
 Meek Modesty is rudely thrust aside:
 Her smiling Fav'rites catch the plenteous Show'r,
 And feel with Rapture Gold's Almighty Pow'r.

STRANGE are the Charms, and wonderful the Arts
 Which FORTUNE, that blind Sorceress, imparts.

Strait

Strait at her Touch, Oh! wond'rous to disclose,
Men metamorphos'd their own Nature lose:
Sense takes the Seat that Folly held before;
Idiots spout Eloquence in classic *Lore*.
Knave, on whom Scorn her piercing Eyes did fix,
Ride with the Virtues in a Coach and Six.
Assurance bold, arm'd with her Gorgon Shield
Of Brass impregnable, usurps the Field:
Before her fly faint Wisdom's tim'rous Train,
Nor dare the Rays of *polish'd Brass* sustain.
Blunt *Wager*, with pert Air and deaf'ning Sounds,
Sense, Reason, Truth, and Equity confounds:
In vain, ye College Sophs, your Art ye ply,
In vain ye weave the Net of Subtilty,
Wager's bold Word your Logie will confute,
And strike the mighty Locke himself quite mute,
If FORTUNE Justice touch with gilded Wand,
Strait drops the Ballance from her trembling Hand;
Her vengeful Sword is thrown ignobly by,
Doom'd in the peaceful Scabbard's Rust to lie;
Or drawn perhaps to tell that wholesome Law
Wisely is made poor petty Rogues to awe.

THRICE

THRICE happy FORTUNE'S Sons! your jovial Days
Nor pining Grief, nor carking Care dismays;
'Tis yours to lead the festive Band of Sport,
'Tis yours to bask in Sunshine of a Court;
'Tis yours all Pleasure's various Charms to try,
And revel in unbounded Luxury.

SKILL'D in the Science of the racing Breed,
From wond'ring Grooms HIPPARCHUS bears the Meed:
His Mem'ry rare with Rapture they admire,
While up he mounts to great ARABIAN Sire;
Tells with Exactness Colour, Shape, and Bone,
And Pedigree more antient than his own.
Panting for Glory forth he leads his Train
Of nimble Coursers to th' Olympian Plain:
Around throng Jockies, Rakes, and Country 'Squires,
Each, led by his own Fancy's Force, admires:
Some the firm Sinew praise, and speedy Make,
Some place on gen'rous Blood alone the Stake.
HIPPARCHUS, strutting 'midst his great Compeers,
With Sportsman's Elegance now bets, now swears:

With

With Skill instructive traverses the Plain,
 Tells when to slacken, when to stretch the Rein;
 With Whip and Spur bids rouse the flagging Steed;
 With quick'ning Execrations mends his Speed.
 How beats his Heart when on the finish'd Course
 Loud-shouting Praise proclaims the Victor Horse!
 How greatly swells he with a fancy'd Name,
 And from his Courser meanly borrows Fame.

THE Dupe of Sharpers, and the Mark of Wits,
 Deep-read in mystic *Hoyle* SPADILLO fits.
 In Proof of Skill the lavish Bet bestows,
 And on a single Card a Manor throws.
 Shoals of devouring Sharks around him wait,
 Ready with open Mouths to gorge the Bait.
 Right, that deep Sages of the Law dispute
 In a long, tedious, ten Years Chanc'ry Suit,
 Here speedy Verdict meets: (how truly sings
 The WISE-MAN, "fleeting Wealth is clad with Wings")
 No Scriv'ner here to spin the Parchment Roll;
 The cunning Knave of Di'monds sweeps the Vole:

NOUGHT else but Reason and Good-sense deny'd,
 SIR GUSTO's Soul with ev'ry Taste's supply'd.
 French Cooks unpeople Ocean, Earth, and Air,
 To deck his splendid Board with various Fare:
 French Cooks, who simple Nature so disguise
 That low-bred Ign'rance stares with vacant Eyes,
 That Temp'rance fears what lurks beneath the Paste,
 And, though with Hunger famish'd, dares not taste.
 Witch-like, the Pot they stir with *Toil and Trouble*,
 While Toads, and Dogs, and Frogs together bubble;
 Hence Soup:—SIR GUSTO sips, with lifted Eye
 “ Blesses his Stars, and thinks it *Luxury*.”
 Alas how fall'n since good ELIZA's Day,
 Have Taste and Strength felt sensible Decay!
 Driv'n from the *Course* by Fricassees and Pies,
 On Side-board ENGLAND's *Beef* neglected lies.
 Nor 'midst the Plenty of such luscious Fare
 Is wanting Harmony to charm the Ear:
 No *heavy* HANDEL in slow lengthen'd Sounds
 The Connoisseur with Oratorio wounds;
 All all is sprightly, volatile, and shrill,
 Quick Chord of Italy, and squeaking Trill.

Exulting

Exulting Hearts to merry Music bound,
Love, Mirth, and jovial Bumpers smile around.
The high-fed Lacquies at the second Board,
Ape the gay Manners of their wanton Lord;
Scorn the starv'd Wretch that shivers at the Door,
Asking in vain the Crumbs that Dogs devour.

THUS FORTUNE'S Sons their giddy Hours employ,
Sunk in the lulling Trance of circling Joy:
Th' important Business of their Lives to find
New Fopperies to feed a trifling Mind:
To banish Reason, grave unwelcome Guest,
That wanton Appetite uncurb'd may feast.

To paint the Follies of the modern Time,
Would quite exhaust the Store of jingling Rhyme.
To tell how vainly fleets the thoughtless Day
Lost in the Maze of Op'ra, Rout, and Play;
How Fidler, Dancer, Conj'ror, and Buffoon,
In the short Space of one revolving Moon
From Bounty's Hand extract more money'd Force
Than honest Labour in a long Life's Course,

Would ask a hundred Mouths, a hundred Tongues,
 Throats cas'd with Iron, and with Brass the Lungs,
 And when the Lungs should flag, and Tongues should tire,
 A hundred and a hundred more require.

ENOUGH, my Friend, to thy discerning Eye
 This Sketch; thy Fancy will the rest supply.
 View the whole Race of fickle human Kind,
 Still this great Truth unshaken will you find:
 That vain weak Mortals Happiness pursue
 WEALTH, GLORY, HONOUR ever in their View.
 For these Tar the unsteady Ocean tries,
 Nor heeds his Part'ner's Tears, nor Childrens Cries.
 For these the Man with ev'ry Comfort blest,
 Abandons calm Retreat and murders Rest.

HER Object gain'd when Wish has reach'd the Goal
 Melts not in sweetest Ecstasy the Soul?
 Casts not Ambition from the Mountain's Brow
 A Smile contemptuous on the Herd below?
 Wretches! who through Life's Vale inglorious steal,
 Taking with mean Content the rustic Meal;

Who

Who with unvary'd Speed one Circle run,
View the same rising, the same setting Sun?

THINK not of solid Weight, and Substance true,
Those airy Shapes that wanton to the View.
WEALTH, GLORY, HONOUR, with Excess of Joy
Flatter in Prospect, in Possession cloy.
By Pleasure's Hand with blooming Roses crown'd,
By Wealth and smiling Love encircled round,
Grave Wisdom's Monarch heav'd the plaintive Sigh,
And sung of human Show "'tis Vanity."

WHY then, sharp Satire, spend thy venom'd Rage
On Vice and Folly of the present Age?
Does Fancy picture with a purer Ray
The shining Virtues of a former Day?
That happy Day, when Wisdom rul'd the Land
And Innocence led Honour hand in hand.
'Tis fond Delusion all, Production vain
Of wild Conceit begot on sickly Brain.
No greater Virtues could our Fathers boast;
They too in Folly's giddy Round were tost;

And

And we their Sons those Scenes are acting o'er
 That their wise Gravity has play'd before.
 Coarser their Manners, and not form'd to please,
 Of Spirit void, of Elegance, and Ease:
 Their Pleasures rough like Di'monds from the Mine,
 Ours is the Praise *to polish and refine.*
 Why nips then Censure's Blast the kindly Fruit
 That springs in ev'ry Soil from Nature's Shoot?
 Since Wisdom Passions to this Frame has giv'n,
 Why rashly blame the wond'rous Work of Heav'n?
 Why call it Vice those Pleasures to pursue
 That bounteous Nature raises to our View?

'Tis not the Growth alone of modern Time,
 Vice springs, I grant, in ev'ry Age and Clime.
 My Censure shoots not at the Passions Use,
 Her Arrow levels at their rank Abuse.
 Passion's soft Gales, if Reason be the Guide,
 Waft the trim Vessel smoothly down the Tide.
 Passion's the Source of ev'ry gen'rous Tie,
 The Bond of Friendship and Humanity.

Whate'er

Whate'er is great, or beautiful, or good,
Springs from our Passions rightly understood.
Harshly I judge not with a Stoic's Pride
All Pleasure to the manly Soul deny'd:
Nor with the narrow Limit of his Line
Virtue to selfish Apathy confine.
Sweet is the Intercourse of social Tie,
Where kindred Souls unite in Harmony.
Sweet are the thousand Charms of polish'd Art,
Binding in magic Chains the feeling Heart.
Let Innocence prepare the rich Repast
With Pleasure such as Reason's self may taste;
Such as the Eye of Modesty may view
Unstain'd her Virgin Cheek, Still ever new
Life thus deceiv'd shall gently steal away,
And calm Reflection smoothe the closing Day.

SHOULD Truth's bold Hand the manly Portrait draw
At which Attention mute might gaze with Awe;
Nor Pride nor Anger in the Eyes should roll,
But Sense sedate and Mildness speak the Soul.

Temp'rance

Temp'rance with comely Bloom should tinge the Face,
Adding to virtuous Worth external Grace.

The Muse this Form should shew to wond'ring Time,
And thus in Epitaph his Praises chime:

" SUCH was the Man, whose stubborn Virtue stood

" The fierce Assault of Vice, who stem'd the Flood

" Of Sin, and plac'd with Prudence on the Shore,

" With Tears beheld the Wrecks the proud Waves bore.

" His Country serv'd no Pension he requir'd,

" But with the Sense of conscious Worth retir'd.

" Found in the silence of his calm Retreat

" Blessings untasted by the guilty Great;

" Clear Conscience, gladd'ning Hope, and Thoughts refin'd,

" That to her great Creator lift the Mind.

" Bright shone each passing Day in white array'd:

" Affliction cheer'd her Blessing largely paid.

" To Hymen true his Race with Joy he view'd,

" And seem'd to breathe in them with Life renew'd:

" With lofty Precept rous'd their glowing Hearts,

" To love of honest Fame and lib'ral Arts:

" Mark'd with experienc'd Skill Life's puzzling Way,

" And told of Dangers that in Ambush lay;

Corruption's

“ Corruption’s Den, enchanting Pleasure’s Snare,
“ But chiefly bade of *treach’rous* Man beware.
“ His Course thus run, with Faith he sought the Shore,
“ Where pining Sorrow sheds her Tears no more :
“ Where Worth by Mortals wrong’d, neglected, scorn’d,
“ ’Midst Seraphs shines with living Crown adorn’d.
“ For Pow’r and Wealth let busy Mortals strive ;
“ ’Tis surely *This* and *This alone* to LIVE.”

THUS, my dear Friend, my Pencil hath essay’d
To scatter through the Piece just Light and Shade.
Defects I deem, unnumber’d will appear,
Defects, that wound the critic Eye and Ear.
Touch then the Canvass with thy Master Hand ;
Life, Grace, and Beauty rise at thy Command.
Thy travell’d Skill hath trod the distant Shore,
Rifling with curious Search all Nature’s Store :
Seen crowding Vot’ries humbly bend the Knee
At Folly’s Shrine, nor daring to be free:
Seen the same Whims a diff’rent Figure wear
In diff’rent Climates nurs’d with diff’rent Care.
Hold Thou the Mirrour up to human Eyes,
Their Likeness shew, and teach Men to be WISE.

T H E E N D.

E I F E

...enchanting Pleasure's Strand
...chilly beds of weary Man
...this run, with Faith he sought the shore
...more;
...wrong'd, neglected, scorn'd
...with living Crown adorn'd
...and Wealth let duly Mortals strive;
...and Yea alone to live.

Thus, my dear Friend, my Penell hath essay'd
...the Piece just light and shade
...will appear.

...the wound the critic Eye and Pen
...the Canvas with the Master-hand
...at the Command



...still hath not
...Search and Store
...the Name
...to be free

...the same Whims a different Figure wear
...with different Care
...up to human life
...and each Man to be wise

E I F E

